

REMARKS / DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Claims 1-14 are pending in the application.

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for priority and receipt of certified copies of all the priority document(s), as well as consideration of the information disclosure statement.

By means of the present amendment, the specification has been amended for better conformance to U.S. practice and to the drawings.

By means of the present amendment, claims 2-7 are amended for non-statutory reasons, such as beginning the dependent claims with 'The' instead of 'A'. The claims are not narrowed in scope and no new matter is added.

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In addition, claims 1-3, 5-6 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over PCT International Publication Number WO 2004/112436 (Kanagawa). Further, claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kanagawa. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that claim 7 contains allowable subject matter. However, Applicants have not rewritten claim 7 in independent form, since it is believed that claims 1-6 and 8-14 are patentable over Kanagawa for at least the following reasons.

It is respectfully submitted that Kanagawa is not available as prior art with regard to the present application since Kanagawa has a Publication date of December 23, 2004, which is after the September 23, 2003 PCT filing date of the present application. It is respectfully submitted that Kanagawa may not be accorded its international filing date of June 13, 2003 since Kanagawa is not published in English.

Moreover, Kanagawa is not prior art to the present application, since Kanagawa has Publication date of December 23, 2004 as well as an international filing date of June 13, 2003, which are both after the European Priority filing date of October 1, 2002 of the present application that designates the U.S. and is published in English as WO 2004/032576. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1-6 and 8-14 are allowable.

In view of the foregoing, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection(s) and/or rejection(s) of record, allow all the pending claims, and find the application in condition for allowance. If any points remain in issue that may best be resolved through a personal or telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Dicran Halajian
Reg. 39,703
Attorney for Applicant(s)
October 10, 2007

THORNE & HALAJIAN, LLP
Applied Technology Center
111 West Main Street
Phone: (631) 665-5139
Fax: (631) 665-5101